

MASON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Meeting of the Board of Directors

April 4, 2008

PRESENT: Tom Botsford, Joe Dean, Jeff Haueter, Jamie Robinson, Kathy Smith, and Ron Tatro

ABSENT: Lance Delbridge, Kim Gorrell, Mark Howe, Robin King-Fuller, Neil Kentner, Phil Preston, and Bob Warnke

I. Call to order at 7:35 AM

II. Minutes of the March meeting – reviewed, but approval postponed due to lack of quorum

III. Treasurer's Report – discussed, but approval postponed due to lack of quorum

IV. Executive Director's Report -- discussed, but approval postponed due to lack of quorum. Five new members since the last report: Connie Stewart, May Family Chiropractic, R-Two Trucking, VFW Post 7309, and the Mason Farmers Market Association. Information on all but the last was in the April newsletter. Membership dues were all due on January 15. About 20 members are past due, and have been sent final reminders/invoices. If their dues are not received by April 10th, they will not have a Chamber listing in the CRG Directories phone book. We will bring the names of those outstanding to the Board at the May meeting for official removal from our member roster. All figures are still fairly normal. While we made Good Morning Mason solvent last year and have plans to do the same for the 2009 Awards Dinner, we have now fallen behind projected income for our March 20th Member Mixer. Most of that is still for the same reason -- because a few sponsorships went unfilled. Please remember to tell people that we haven't raised member dues in over a decade, so we're really dependent on sponsorships for our operations. M-36 booklets (see last newsletters) are now being distributed by hand by our Ambassadors to ALL businesses and organizations on M-36. The M-36 construction update meetings on Monday mornings at City Hall begin April 21st. Non-members are getting additional information in the form of a special newsletter. They'll get another one later in early summer promoting our parade booklet. Our next Good Morning Mason is Thursday, April 24th at the Ingham County Fairgrounds Community Building. The program will start 5 minutes earlier, so we're telling people that the doors open at 7:15 AM. This GMM is co-sponsored by Mason Elevator and will have a Spring Fling theme. We'll roll out both our Dealers Choice Raffle and our Mason Values campaign for 2008. We paid \$1900 to the Mason DDA last month to cover half the cost of the flower plantings downtown. We were hoping to only pay \$500, but they did not get enough subscriptions to their "Put Down Roots" program to cover the extra costs. We need to think about upgrading the Microsoft Office programs for our three computers. I'll start to investigate this month and let you know what we discover.

V. Committee Reports:

Executive Committee – The committee reviewed and approved a proposal for renaming the MACC scholarship to honor Aggie Corner and dedication of proceeds from the golf outing to the scholarship. **The Executive Committee recommended that the Board approve these changes, but that needed to be postponed to the next Board meeting due to lack of Board quorum.** The committee looked at and briefly discussed options for group purchase of tickets for upcoming Wharton Center events. The committee discussed the reports and agenda for the Board of Directors meeting on Friday, April 4, 2008. The purchase of the next scheduled \$5,000 investment in April should be open to all financial members not currently managing any Chamber funds. This will be discussed with those members, based on the year the business joined the Chamber.

Ambassadors Committee – Ad hoc committee developments and assignments were discussed: *Good Morning, Mason!* -- The next GMM on April 24th will have a Spring Fling theme and we will be rolling out the Raffle and Mason Values programs for 2008. Because we want to retain the "introduction of everyone," the publicized start time will be moved up to 7:15 AM. However, the actual program will only be starting 5 minutes earlier at 7:40 instead of at 7:45 AM. The Chamber will also hold a Member Orientation (Chamber 101) session immediately following the April and August GMMs. Deb Birdsall and Kathy Smith have offered to lead the two orientation sessions for new members after the April and August Good Morning Mason meetings. We still need people to visit prospective and new members also. *Member Mixers* -- We discussed plans to date for the one on March 20. Sponsors are still needed, but we have support from Cobblestone Events center, Ingham County Farm Bureau, and LAFCU. We've kept the lowest possible price on admission to possibly build attendance. A euchre tournament and karaoke are both on tap. A&W will provide food. Jon Grocki will direct the Euchre Tournament and Jenny Stewart will do the Karaoke. It was decided to publicize the event to the entire community. *MACC Golf Classic Outing* -- The golf committee will meet again soon. Save the date postcards will go out in April. This year is the 35th Anniversary of this event, so a ribbon cutting is in order. Discussion again included tying proceeds from the event to the Chamber's scholarship. It was also again discussed that the scholarship could be renamed the Agnes "Aggie" Corner Scholarship. This would have to be decided on by the Executive Committee and the Board. In other business: *M-36 Information Distribution and Membership Solicitation* -- We are asking people to sign up to do this activity delivering M-36 reconstruction information to members (along with a toy hardhat) and information and membership information to non-members at the same time. This will only go to those businesses and organizations right on M-36. *Visitors Center* -- We will have to purchase a new canopy this next month to replace the one damaged during Down Home Days. *Ribbon Cuttings* -- The Ara Bella hair salon ribbon cutting went very well. We will probably be doing one for the museum and laundromat soon.

Economic Development Committee – Dennis Anderson reported that Chamber materials were distributed to members at the two home shows. There was a lot of traffic at the MSU show, with somewhat less at the Summit. The reaction of many Lansing people is still that “Mason almost like halfway to Detroit or Jackson.” The “close to Lansing message may be one that could be advertised, but LSJ is expensive. Greater Lansing Real Estate Guide could be less -- like \$99 per page. The targets need to be realtors and employers. The next Mason Area Entrepreneur Club meeting for 2008 is on Tuesday, May 20th from 6 to 9 PM in the City hall basement. They now have a short workshop at the beginning before their open discussion. The next workshop will be on the services of Capital Area Michigan Works! Sue Pigg said that more brownfield projects are being initiated now, including possibly the storefronts on E. Ash in downtown Mason. It took several years to get such projects going in the County. Jackson National Life expansion is continuing. While we are not seeing much growth in Ingham for the manufacturing industry, other types are stronger, such as insurance, medical, and warehousing. Unfortunately, there is little if any federal and state support for those types of businesses. A lot of money is tied to “who you hire” and there is more support for low and moderate income opportunities. Meridian is doing an entrepreneurial fair for youth. The Small Business & Technical Development Center at LCC is doing counseling at the Okemos library a few hours each week. They also are doing a panel seminar there. Art Good mentioned that petitions for a ballot proposal for a part-time legislature and removal of term limits would be available very soon. They need about 350,000 signatures. Doug Klein gave a report on the annual Chambers’ Legislative Dinner. Ron Tatro also attended. Marty Colburn said that the City is trying to be more business-oriented. Nitrex have a furnace and crane going in as part of their \$1.6 million investment with about 20 job positions total planned. Planning Commission also now has more of a business orientation. HardTech reports that it is doing well overall. Six residential permits were pulled this week for the Summerwood development. No activity yet on the restaurant. Jeff Oesterle discussed how the State of Michigan’s view of the agricultural industry seems to be narrowing to biofuels. Renewable energy initiatives are a big push again by the State. Legislation to enable buy-back from Consumers Energy and others for local generation like in solar and wind is needed. Brent Forsberg briefly discussed the entrepreneurial programs at LCC’s West Campus. Dennis Anderson said that re-zoning for the assisted living property is now done. The group is Retirement Living Management from Lowell.

Hometown USA Committee – The DDA flower planter program “Put Down Roots” hasn’t “found its roots” yet, so the bill for 2007 payable now is \$1900 again. We were hoping to pay only about \$500. This program was promoted in our newsletter last month and will be in again next month. A general discussion of the 4th of July Celebration and Parade took place, including the car show, float trophies, and a bike decorating station. Ad hoc committees need to be revitalized for the parades. Bill Potter will not be available, so besides Jody Summerville, Norm Austin and Mike Prelesnik were mentioned as possible helpers. A discussion of the TNL concerts and promoting Thursday Night Live evenings took place, including the Mason Area Idol competition. The ad hoc committee will meet again soon to finalize the schedule of performers and solicit sponsorships. Spring Fling and Down Home Days were discussed briefly and updates were given.

Membership Services Committee – The committee discussed the members with outstanding 2008 dues. Final reminders will go out again in April. Prospects for reaching over \$40,000 in dues income and maintaining membership at about 260 in 2008 are very good. A few members with outstanding dues may need to be approached informally as well. The Horse Show for 2008 continues to be worked on by Show Manager Cathy Groce. The booklet will be sent out the first week of April. A revised plan was approved by the Raffle Committee and Membership Services committee. Besides Andrews, Kelly & Holt, other dealers to approach for participation would also include a pitch for membership. Okemos and South Lansing dealers with non-competitive new car nameplates would include: Capital Honda, BMW of Okemos, Courtesy Ford, Spartan Toyota, Capital Cadillac/Hummer, Lexus of Lansing, Snethecamp Dodge, the Lincoln/Mercury dealer and the Kia/Nissan dealer on South Cedar in Lansing. Champion Chrysler/Jeep is also a possibility, although they are now on West Saginaw in Lansing. Letter with the promotional package should be ready soon. Same for the “Big Wheel” sponsors. Early Bird prizes should be about \$30 to \$40 in cost. While an informal policy is now in effect, the committee is still considering a formal proposal to the Board for member-only sponsorship of most Chamber events, although a few other programs would be open to non-members. Admission to events would remain available to non-members at a higher price.

VI. Old Business – None.

VII. New Business – None

VIII. Committee Assignments: Executive Committee - Wednesday, May 7 - 9:30 AM, Ambassadors Committee - Tuesday, April 15 - 7:30 AM, Economic Development Committee - Thursday, April 17 - 7:30 AM, Hometown USA Committee – Tuesday, April 15 - 8:30 AM, Membership Services Committee - Thursday, April 17 - 9:30 AM.

IX. Announcements: “Keep your \$600 Right Here!” posters are available. Put directions to the Fairgrounds Community Building on website for Good Morning Mason.

X. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 AM.

The next Board of Directors meeting is Friday, May 9, 2008 at 7:30 AM in the Chamber office.

Minutes Submitted 5/6/08 by the Secretary--Douglas J. Klein, APR